

Sierra Roundtree

Rocklands Farm

Hi my name is Sierra Roundtree. I'm a 6th grader at Hardy Middle School in Washington DC. On November 6th my class took a field trip to Rocklands Farm in Poolesville, MD.

Most of my classmates had never been to a farm before, so we didn't know what to expect when we got off the bus. We met Greg and Anna, the two head farmers, and off we went.

I quickly saw that Rocklands Farm was different than any other farm that I had ever been to. First, we met the animals. There were goats, cows, pigs, chickens, geese, and more! The animals seemed very content and healthy because they get to roam around the farm on pasture. This is unlike most other animals in agriculture that live in confinement.

We learned that the animals play a significant role in the larger farm ecosystem at Rocklands. Their manure has lots of nutrients that fertilize the soil, which keeps everything on the farm growing healthy. Thanks to the animals, Greg and Anna don't have to spray pesticides and chemicals on the plants.

They also have a large composting system where excess food and organic matter is piled up and, over time, breaks down to become fertile soil as well.

I also learned that growing vegetables is a lot of work when we helped Greg and Anna plant and harvest. Because it was almost winter, we planted garlic which will harden underground with the frosts and then come up in the Spring!

All the hard work is also lots of fun and pays off when you get to *literally* eat the fruits of your labor. The radish I snacked on, never tasted so crisp and sweet! And our local lunch of burgers and kale salad was as fresh and healthy and delicious as they come!

Sometimes growing up in a city, you forget to think about where your food is coming from and who grew it. From now on, when I see vegetables on grocery store shelves, I'll think about the time and energy it took to plant, grow, harvest and transport it off the farm and into cities like Washington, DC. More importantly, I'll be more thankful for the people that grew and raised the food I eat every day. I won't forget this field trip to Rocklands Farm anytime soon.

